

RECORD COPY

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~~~SECRET~~

NIE 63.2-55

16 August 1955

# NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

## NUMBER 63.2-55

(Supersedes portions of NIE 63-7-54 on Cambodia)

### PROBABLE DEVELOPMENTS IN CAMBODIA TO JULY 1956

DOCUMENT NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
 NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐  
~~DECLASSIFIED~~  
 CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C  
 NEXT REVIEW DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 AUTH: HR 70-2  
 DATE: 19 JAN 81 REVIEWER: 006514  
 023884

DOCUMENT NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
 NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐  
~~DECLASSIFIED~~  
 CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C  
 NEXT REVIEW DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 AUTH: HR 70-2  
 DATE: 19 JAN 81 REVIEWER: 65141

Submitted by the

**DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE**

*The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff.*

Concurred in by the

**INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

*on 16 August 1955. Concurring were the Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence; the Director of Intelligence, USAF; and the Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff. The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the IAC, and the Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.*

RECORD COPY

~~SECRET~~~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

COPY NO, 299

**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

**DISSEMINATION NOTICE**

1. This estimate was disseminated by the Central Intelligence Agency. This copy is for the information and use of the recipient indicated on the front cover and of persons under his jurisdiction on a need to know basis. Additional essential dissemination may be authorized by the following officials within their respective departments:

- a. Special Assistant to the Secretary for Intelligence, for the Department of State
- b. Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, for the Department of the Army
- c. Director of Naval Intelligence, for the Department of the Navy
- d. Director of Intelligence, USAF, for the Department of the Air Force
- e. Deputy Director for Intelligence, Joint Staff, for the Joint Staff
- f. Director of Intelligence, AEC, for the Atomic Energy Commission
- g. Assistant to the Director, FBI, for the Federal Bureau of Investigation
- h. Assistant Director for Collection and Dissemination, CIA, for any other Department or Agency

2. This copy may be retained, or destroyed by burning in accordance with applicable security regulations, or returned to the Central Intelligence Agency by arrangement with the Office of Collection and Dissemination, CIA.

3. When an estimate is disseminated overseas, the overseas recipients may retain it for a period not in excess of one year. At the end of this period, the estimate should either be destroyed, returned to the forwarding agency, or permission should be requested of the forwarding agency to retain it in accordance with IAC-D-69/2, 22 June 1953.

**WARNING**

This material contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the espionage laws, Title 18, USC, Secs. 793 and 794, the transmission or revelation of which in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

White House  
National Security Council  
Department of State  
Department of Defense  
Operations Coordinating Board  
Atomic Energy Commission  
Federal Bureau of Investigation

## PROBABLE DEVELOPMENTS IN CAMBODIA TO JULY 1956<sup>1</sup>

### THE PROBLEM

To analyze the present strengths and weaknesses of Cambodia, and to estimate probable future developments and trends to July 1956.

### CONCLUSIONS

1. Cambodia's principal current problem is the conflict between the young ex-King, Norodom Sihanouk, and the majority of the country's intelligentsia over the issue of royal absolutism versus constitutional monarchy. Although Sihanouk is a patriot and appears deeply concerned with the welfare of his people, he apparently believes that the Cambodians are not prepared to govern themselves. (*Paras. 8-9*)
2. Sihanouk, by virtue of his popularity and influence over the government, will probably continue to be the dominant figure in Cambodia over at least the next year. In the elections for a national assembly, scheduled for September 1955, he will probably be able to influence or intimidate a sufficient number of voters to insure victory for his supporters and thus secure the constitutional changes necessary to assure royal direction of national affairs. Such a development would probably result in a period of temporary stability. However, the basic political division would remain and the opposition would retain some resources for obstructing government programs. (*Paras. 20-22*)
3. In the unlikely event the Democratic Party wins the election, prospects for instability would increase. In that case, Sihanouk would probably at some time attempt to regain power, perhaps involving the use of force as a last resort. (*Para. 23*)
4. Regardless of the outcome of the election, Cambodia will probably continue to seek economic and military assistance from the West, while attempting to foster better relations with Asian countries, particularly the neutralist bloc. Because of extreme sensitivity concerning independence and sovereignty, Cambodia will almost certainly be unwilling to cooperate in regional security programs unless its security is under immediate Communist threat.
5. The Cambodian economy is underdeveloped and reveals no signs of significant growth. However, economic conditions in the past have generally been regarded as satisfactory and, assuming continued foreign assistance, will probably not threaten political stability in 1955-1956. The ineptness with which the government is handling its rice problem, particularly arrangements for foreign assist-

<sup>1</sup> This estimate supersedes portions of NIE 63-7-54 on Cambodia.

~~SECRET~~

2

ance, could result in serious local shortages during the coming year. (Paras. 33, 36)

6. Although the Cambodian army suffers from poor leadership and low morale, in conjunction with the police it will probably have the capability to continue to maintain the present degree of internal order. However, if some of the rallied bandit leaders revert to dissident guerrilla warfare with forces of about their former size, the army and the police combined would probably not have the capability to suppress the dissidents and would probably not be able to maintain security in much of the countryside. (Para. 32)

7. Communists in Cambodia do not pose a significant threat to internal security or stability, nor will they during the limited period of this estimate. Over the longer run, however, Communist influence among the educated elite may increase if they are denied broader participation in the responsibilities and rewards of government. In addition, the Communists will probably seek to exploit and subvert the Chinese and Vietnamese minorities who are active in the country's commercial affairs. If the Viet Minh extends its power to the borders of Cambodia, the Communist capability to infiltrate, to subvert, and to develop guerrilla forces would be greatly increased. (Para. 26)

## DISCUSSION

### I. INTRODUCTION

8. Cambodia enjoys a degree of homogeneity unusual among the countries of Southeast Asia. It is united by a common language, a common sense of national history, reverence for the throne, and adherence to Buddhism, the state religion. Communist power does not pose an immediate threat to Cambodia's frontiers. The principal internal problem at the present time is the political turmoil created by the conflict between the young ex-King, Norodom Sihanouk, and the majority of the country's intelligentsia over the issue of royal absolutism versus constitutional monarchy. This contest apparently is of little concern to the bulk of the 4,500,000 Cambodians.

### II. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

#### Background

9. In 1947, despite Cambodia's rudimentary political development and undefined position within the French Union, King Norodom Sihanouk promulgated a liberal constitution providing for a prime minister and cabinet responsible to a popularly elected national assembly. In the years following, Sihanouk —

a highly sensitive and intelligent young man with an inordinate sense of pride coupled with national devotion — became increasingly dissatisfied with parliamentary government. This became particularly apparent after the elections of 1951. Although the Democratic Party won a substantial majority, the Assembly continued to be disrupted by factionalism and the cabinet made little progress toward gaining Cambodian independence. Finally in mid-1952 Sihanouk dissolved the Assembly. He explained that a parliamentary government, handicapped by inexperience and factionalism, was unable to achieve national independence and peace. Sihanouk's success in achieving independence late in 1953 and in gaining confirmation in the Geneva Agreements of Cambodia's independent status increased his personal stature and popular support.

10. After Geneva, with independence fully achieved, the rivalry for political power and positions among the elite of the country was greatly intensified. Anti-French feelings no longer united Cambodia's political leaders and their followers in a common cause. Sihanouk apparently believed that this situation made

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

3

it more necessary than ever that the country should be ruled by the Crown and not by democratic processes. He was supported by those who believed that their political fortunes depended upon the continuation of monarchical rule. On the other hand, the opposition leaders favored adherence to the 1947 constitution because they were convinced their political future depended on a reduction in the King's power. Civil servants formed the most important element within the opposition, although a few of these constitutionalists were members of the royal family.

11. Early in 1955, Sihanouk apparently decided to secure his position of absolute authority by revising the constitution. However, once his proposals and his plan to make them effective by decree were known, they drew heavy criticism from most of the diplomatic representatives in Cambodia and from the Democratic Party. Sihanouk was apparently disturbed by this adverse reaction to "reforms" he believed would be beneficial to his country and by reports that the February referendum which had indicated he had overwhelming popular support from his people had been rigged by his followers. He unexpectedly abdicated in favor of his parents on 2 March 1955. His avowed purpose was to secure popular approval for his policies in the national elections, now scheduled for September 1955.

### Government

12. King Suramarit and Queen Kossamak are the present rulers of Cambodia. The elderly King has limited political experience and is considered a mediocrity. The Queen, though intelligent and forceful, has aroused widespread antagonism in Cambodian political circles in the past through her intrigues and backstage political maneuvers. The palace coterie, left over from Sihanouk's reign, is inept and corrupt.

13. Recent Cambodian governments have apparently conducted routine business in a reasonably competent manner. However, they have done little to suppress widespread corruption within the government, to extend security to remote areas, to stimulate economic activity, or to revitalize the armed

forces. They have been able to coast along primarily because of the absence of any basic social or economic discontent among the population, and because of the apparent passivity and the amiable temperament of the people.

14. The present cabinet of Prime Minister Leng Ngeth, appointed by Sihanouk in January 1955 and reconfirmed by the new monarchs, is essentially an interim government to serve until the election of a new national assembly in September 1955. The cabinet has recently been reorganized following the resignation, on Sihanouk's orders, of all men who are taking an active part in his political campaign. Its current members are largely technicians and men who have closely supported the prince in the past but who apparently are not to stand for office in the forthcoming elections.

15. Despite his abdication, Sihanouk remains the country's dominant personality. He continues to influence the government through his parents and through the Royal High Councilors. Penn Nouth and Sam Sary are the most influential in the latter group because of the high prestige and considerable political power which they have gained as members of former cabinets.

### Politics and the Elections

16. In preparation for national elections, Sihanouk has launched a new political movement, Sangkum Reastr Niyum (SRN), variously termed the "Socialist People's Community" or the "Popular People's Rally." The movement is devoted to obtaining enough votes in the next National Assembly to pass Sihanouk's constitutional reform program. The SRN's platform calls for the abolition of all political parties and for the direct election of village representatives. While there would still be a national assembly composed of members to be elected by these village representatives, with the power to enact legislation, the SRN proposal would in fact place absolute power in the Crown. The cabinet would be responsible to the Crown, and the Crown would have veto power over all legislation.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

4

17. Although virtually no one desires to eliminate the monarchy, the majority of intellectuals oppose Sihanouk's program. They favor a constitutional monarchy with political power in the hands of an elected assembly. Prior to the creation of the SRN, the Democratic Party had been the only political group with an established, cohesive organization. It held a large majority of the seats in the National Assembly elected in 1951. Reorganized in January 1955, Democratic Party leadership is still in a state of flux. There is a directing committee which is at least temporarily dominated by the left wing or "progressives" of the party. Most "progressives" belong to the younger group, primarily students or ex-students returned from France who are radical on domestic issues and neutralist in their foreign policy. The bulk of the moderate right wing or "conservatives" are civil servants who in the past have constituted the major support and strength of the Democratic Party.

18. The most important individual opposed to Sihanouk and his movement is Son Ngoc Thanh, former Cambodian prime minister and national leader. In March 1952, he and a few close followers fled to the hills as guerrillas to wage their own fight for national independence from the French. Since that time, however, Thanh's popularity among Cambodian intellectuals and his hold over his followers have apparently greatly decreased — as a result both of Sihanouk's personal success in gaining independence from the French and of Thanh's own inactivity and negativism. During this period of dissidence, Thanh's complicity with the Communists was alleged, but it has never been proven. He has accepted amnesty from the throne but has remained in hiding for fear of assassination by the ex-King who has an almost pathological fear and jealousy of Thanh. Thanh apparently does not intend to enter actively into the forthcoming national elections but he will probably exert considerable influence through the Democratic Party. His principal lieutenant, Ea Sichau, who has been described by some sources as a Marxist, is now a member of the Democratic Party's directing committee.

19. A principal election issue for both the SRN and the Democratic Party will be allegations of corruption in the present cabinet. In an effort to disassociate itself from the present government, the SRN has already ordered its active members in the cabinet to resign.

20. The SRN, led by Sihanouk, has a number of advantages over its opposition. The ex-King has great personal popularity. He has the loyalty of the bulk of the Army, in particular its officer cadre, and can probably rely on the support of the national police. In addition, the SRN has great financial resources, a long headstart in campaigning, use of the communication media of the government, and the power to intimidate members of the Democratic Party who are civil servants.

21. The outcome of the elections will depend in large measure on the extent to which Sihanouk uses these very considerable resources to intimidate the opposition and to influence the vote; for if campaigning were free and balloting fair, the Democrats would be likely to regain their past majority. Sihanouk's freedom of action may be somewhat restricted by a regard for possible adverse reaction from foreign countries. The presence of the ICC, which is charged by the Geneva Agreements with observation of the election process, may work in favor of the Democratic Party. However, we believe Sihanouk will probably use whatever means he believes necessary to win a majority in the elections. Should the SRN fail to win the three-fourths majority necessary to amend the constitution, Sihanouk might still be able after elections to persuade or coerce a sufficient number of deputies to achieve his goal.

22. The outlook for political stability in Cambodia following the elections will depend in large measure upon Sihanouk's attitude and reaction to events. If Sihanouk's supporters win a majority sufficiently large to permit enactment of his constitutional "reforms," there will probably be a period of temporary stability. The present rulers may abdicate in Sihanouk's favor or the prince might be content to exercise power indirectly until the death of one or both parents permitted his re-

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

5

turn to the throne. Basic political divisions would remain unresolved, however. The opposition would retain some resources for obstructing government programs, and Democratic leaders would in time almost certainly test out the range of action permissible under then-existing measures of repression. In the aftermath of a Democratic defeat, the "progressive" wing might secure control of the party, and it is possible that leaders of the Democratic Party would turn to Son Ngoc Thanh in order to capitalize on his prestige among the populace and his surviving influence among the Buddhist priests and the military. At the same time, Communist elements would find increased opportunities for serious penetration of the left-wing group, possibly leading to the further withdrawal of moderate elements from the Democratic Party.

23. If the royalists should fail to secure a majority sufficient to enact Sihanouk's "reforms" or if, as seems less likely, the Democrats and their allies should win the election, the prospects for instability would increase. Sihanouk would probably, at some time, attempt to regain power. This attempt might involve the use of force, thus creating the possibility that a struggle for control of the armed forces may add a new element of instability. Within the Democratic Party, however, the previously dominant moderate elements would probably regain control as a result of an election victory, and Son Ngoc Thanh's immediate return to power would be less likely.

### III. INTERNAL SECURITY

#### Cambodian Communists

24. There has been little discernible Communist activity in Cambodia since Geneva. The "Khmer Resistance Committee" which conducted guerrilla operations under Viet Minh leadership during the Indochinese war, has not been reported active since 1954. Nevertheless we believe that a small Communist cadre and party apparatus exist in Cambodia but that Cambodian Communists have little capability by themselves to disrupt internal security.

25. The Communists in Cambodia for the next year or two will probably concentrate on political rather than guerrilla action. They will probably seek to infiltrate and subvert, particularly groups led by former bandit chiefs now in uneasy alliance with the government, and to intensify political disunity within the Cambodian elite. A likely target for infiltration is the Democratic Party, and some of the newly elected members of its directing committee are suspect. Communist or Communist-sponsored candidates are entered in at least 35 election districts, concentrated chiefly in areas formerly occupied by guerrilla groups or where bandit activity currently makes for poor conditions of internal security. Though Communist influence within Cambodia will probably remain slight during the next year, the Communists can be expected to exert their limited influence to encourage Cambodian neutrality and to improve their own organizational capabilities.

26. Over the longer term, the Communists may be able to increase their strength by attracting returning students and other intellectuals, especially if the throne continues to frustrate the adoption of democratic processes. In addition, they will probably seek to exploit and subvert the Chinese and Vietnamese minorities who are active in the country's commercial affairs. If the Viet Minh extended its power to the borders of Cambodia, the Communist capability to infiltrate, to subvert, to sabotage, and to develop guerrilla forces would be greatly increased.

#### Other Dissident Elements

27. Although a number of bandit groups were active in 1953 and 1954, most have rallied to the Crown and have become suppletives in the Cambodian Army. However, the leaders, who apparently retain the loyalties of their men, remain a potentially disruptive influence to the countryside and on several occasions they have threatened to return to their former dissidence. There are still an estimated 2,000 bandits active in Cambodia, but they do not present a direct threat to political stability because of their apparent lack of interest in political matters.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

## Cambodian Military and Security Forces

28. The Cambodian Army has a total strength of 37,000 including 5,000 National Guard and 9,000 auxiliary forces. Because of a serious deficiency in trained leadership there have been numerous incidents of indiscipline, corruption, desertion, and poor morale. The army is capable of carrying out operations up to battalion size against guerrilla-type forces, but would be unable by itself to defend Cambodia from external aggression. In conjunction with Cambodian security forces, the army probably has the capability to deal with the threat to internal order posed by existing bandit groups. The Cambodian Air Force with only a few trainer type aircraft has no combat capability. The Cambodian Navy of some 300 men and a few river patrol vessels is employed primarily in patrolling the inland waterways.

29. The Cambodian armed forces are dependent on external support for training and military equipment. As provided for in an agreement signed in 1954, a French military advisory and training mission, consisting of 125 officers and 375 noncommissioned officers, was retained in Cambodia. In addition, under the agreement of 16 May 1955, the US will provide direct military assistance to Cambodia and a small Military Assistance Advisory Group. The current neutralist temper of Cambodia may preclude expansion of foreign training missions.

30. In the past, Cambodian army morale and efficiency have varied with the vigor and ability of the Minister of Defense and the Chief of Staff. Unfortunately, the few Cambodians who are qualified for these posts do not enjoy the confidence of Sihanouk and the tenure of capable leaders in top military positions has normally been brief. Unless the situation changes and the general level of officer leadership in the army is raised, there will be little improvement in the effectiveness, morale, and discipline of the army.

31. The internal security forces without the aid of the army are probably not capable of maintaining public safety or of effectively combatting Communist infiltration and sub-

version. Professional Cambodian internal security forces totalling 14,600 are made up of 2,400 national and municipal police and 12,200 provincial guards and auxiliaries. In addition there are 13,300 "forces vives" who are unpaid, poorly trained volunteer police.

32. During the period of this estimate, the Cambodian Army in conjunction with the police will probably have the capability to continue to maintain the present degree of internal order. However, if some of the rallied bandit leaders revert to dissident guerrilla warfare with forces of about their former size, the army and the police combined would probably not have the capability to suppress the dissidents and would probably not be able to maintain security in much of the countryside.

## IV. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

33. Although the Cambodian economy is underdeveloped and reveals no signs of significant growth, economic conditions in the past have generally been regarded as satisfactory. Rice, Cambodia's chief asset, is produced on small farms which, because of the primitive methods used, have a low rate of productivity. However, there is little pressure on land resources, per capita rice consumption is high compared to other Southeast Asian countries, and there are usually about 200,000 metric tons of rice available for export. With its rice surplus and some 18,000 metric tons of rubber available for export, Cambodia has been able to maintain a relatively high level of textile, petroleum, and other imports (roughly \$60,000,000 annually) and to finance the small civil budget of about \$35,000,000 through customs receipts.

34. However, the drought last winter and spring caused a sharp drop in rice production, and there now exists a food deficit, the extent of which is unknown. Largely as a result of sharply reduced earnings from rice, foreign trade has declined, causing serious losses in government revenues. The budget deficit in 1955, which is to be offset by US assistance, is estimated at \$10,000,000.

35. Cambodia's economic difficulties have been aggravated by its unsatisfactory economic re-

~~SECRET~~



lations with neighboring countries. Trade among the former Associated States has been subject to tariffs. South Vietnam has been slow in transferring \$30,000,000 which is the Cambodian share of customs receipts collected at the port of Saigon prior to dissolution of the customs union. Recent conclusion of a draft agreement on commercial and financial relations between Cambodia and South Vietnam is one of the most concrete signs of improvement in Cambodian economic relations with its neighbors. Inauguration of rail service with Thailand in April 1955 affords Cambodia an alternate transit route in the event that relations with South Vietnam do not work out satisfactorily, even though trade with Thailand remains limited pending agreements on customs duties, payments mechanisms, and other issues.

36. Assuming continued foreign assistance, economic conditions will probably not threaten political stability in 1955-1956. Available foreign exchange resources can be expected to be sufficient to meet consumer goods import needs, even if rice earnings remain at a low level. The ineptness with which the government is handling its rice problem, particularly arrangements for foreign assistance, could result in serious local shortages during the coming year. Foreign assistance, provided almost entirely by the US, totals about \$45,000,000. There is little prospect for a substantial improvement in Cambodia's economic capabilities during the period of this estimate.

## V. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

37. Although the Cambodian government is basically anti-Communist and appears anxious to maintain close relations with the Western Powers, particularly the US, it has recently favored a "neutralist" foreign policy. This trend probably develops from its desire to heighten its prestige and international standing, to secure the political backing of other non-Communist Asian countries, and to encourage the Chinese Communists to respect Cambodian independence. It also appears to reflect the great concern of Sihanouk not to impair Cambodia's recently won independence by too close association with any foreign power.

38. Regardless of the outcome of the election, Cambodia will probably continue to seek economic and military assistance from the West while attempting to foster better relations with Asian countries, particularly the neutralist bloc. Because of extreme sensitivity concerning independence and sovereignty, Cambodia will almost certainly be unwilling to cooperate in regional security programs unless its security is under immediate Communist threat.

39. *The French Position in Cambodia.* Although recognizing the complete independence of Cambodia, France continues to regard the country as "associated" with the French Union. Cambodia, however, has been silent about its position in the French Union, and its political ties with France are ill-defined and tenuous. The only symbol of Cambodian adherence to the French Union is the presence at Phnom Penh and Paris of French and Cambodian High Commissioners. Unlike Laos and South Vietnam, Cambodia has made no effort to reach an accord with France. Nor does it send representatives to the Assembly of the French Union at Paris.

40. At the present time, the French are seeking to preserve some measure of their cultural, economic, and military influence in Cambodia. They probably hope these efforts at best will cause Cambodia to renew its political ties with the French Union, and at a minimum will provide some check on the relative growth of US influence in Cambodia.

41. French economic aspirations are reflected in the eagerness with which they assumed responsibility for the construction of a \$10,000,000 deep-water port at Kompong Som (a project of the highest priority from the Cambodian viewpoint), in the establishment of private French banking interests in Cambodia, and in their recently announced plans to establish small French industrial establishments in Phnom Penh. Other French economic assistance to Cambodia, totalling approximately \$8,000,000, is to be allocated for education, public administration, and public works. For their part, the Cambodians suspect that the French are primarily interested in preserving

SECRET

~~SECRET~~

8

their economic interests in the area and express fears that the French will not fulfill their commitments to build the port and carry out other proposed projects.

42. Although the US now provides the principal financial and material support for the Cambodian armed forces, the Cambodian Army is still largely dependent for training assistance on the French Military Mission. This dependence is likely to continue during the period of this estimate.

43. The French are deeply suspicious of US intentions in Cambodia, as they are in Laos and South Vietnam, and are inclined to believe that the US is utilizing its vastly superior economic and material resources to supplant French influence in the area. These suspicions have been intensified by US insistence on extending its economic and military assistance directly to Cambodia, and by what the French interpret as general US reluctance to coordinate its economic and military assistance policies with those of France. Although the French have ultimately accepted an increasing US role, they have done so only reluctantly and on occasion to the accompaniment of attempts to discredit US actions, including pronouncements through the semi-official French Information Service radio station, France-Asie, at Saigon.

44. *Relations with South Vietnam and Laos.* Despite the close relationships with Laos and South Vietnam that have existed during the past 75 years under French control, Cambodia has made no effort to establish formal diplomatic relations with its Indochinese neighbors. Cambodia's attitude toward Vietnam is conditioned by racial antipathy, fears of potential Vietnamese expansion, and long-standing, but poorly substantiated, claims to territory in South Vietnam. Cambodia so far has ignored Laos.

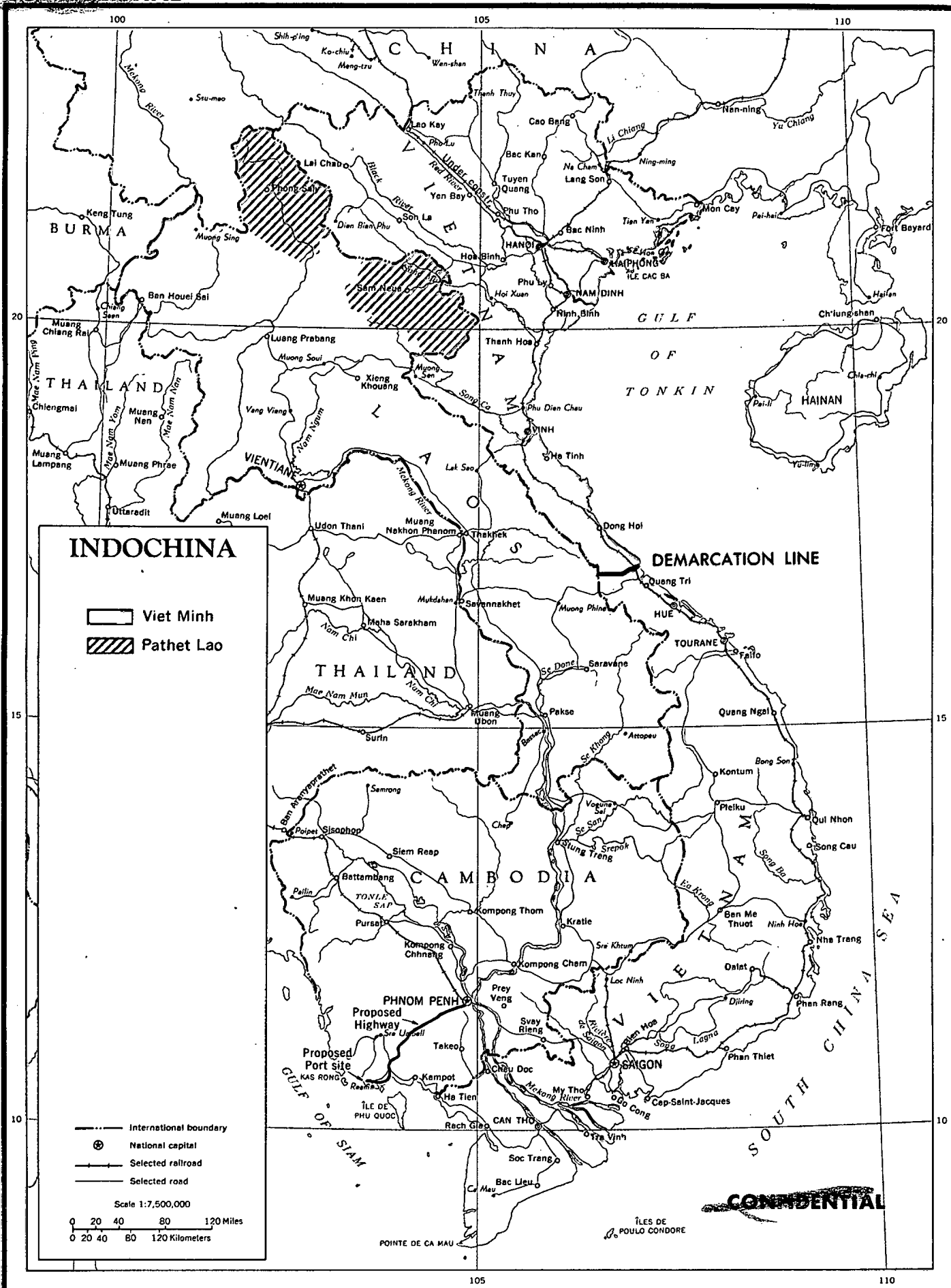
45. *Indian Relations with Cambodia.* Since Nehru's visit to Cambodia in December 1954, India has displayed an increased interest in

Cambodia. Nehru has alluded to the cultural affinity between the two countries and has encouraged Cambodia to adopt a position of neutrality, but he has thus far not committed India to other than general diplomatic support. In recognition of Cambodia's independence, India in May 1955 established a legation in Phnom Penh. The Cambodian government, for its part, has welcomed friendly relations with India but has shown annoyance at Indian sympathy for Son Ngoc Thanh and at the excessive interest taken by the Indian ICC chairman in the election preparations and in the MDAP agreement. Although the possibility of Indian guidance and assistance in the training of the Cambodian Army has been discussed, such a project has not materialized.

46. *UK Relations with Cambodia.* Since Geneva, the UK has taken an increasing interest in Cambodia. As one of the Geneva co-chairmen, Britain has sought to insure strict adherence to the terms of the agreements. Apparently believing that Far East tension can best be reduced by increased Indian involvement in that area as a deterrent to Communist pressure, the UK has encouraged a closer Cambodian-Indian relationship.

47. *Thai Relations with Cambodia.* In its relations with Cambodia, the principal concern of Thailand had been to preserve and strengthen a non-Communist government as protection against the threat of further Communist expansion from Vietnam. The Thai government supported the efforts of King Sihanouk to secure independence from France, and is currently moving to develop closer economic and political relations with the present government. At the same time, Thai leaders, notably General Phao and several politicians with family or business connections in Cambodia, have maintained contact with Cambodian leaders outside the government. It is probable that Thai officials, uncertain of future political developments in Cambodia, wish to maintain contact with all Cambodian groups that could possibly gain power.

~~SECRET~~

**CONFIDENTIAL**

13986 7-55 13996 8-55

**CONFIDENTIAL**

~~SECRET~~

RECORD COPY

~~SECRET~~